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THE ANTIDOTE, IN A LETTER TO THE Free--Thinker,

Occasion'd by the Management of the Present Dispute between Dr. *Woodward* and certain other Physicians.

----- *Quod Medicorum est*
Promittunt Medici ---- Hor.

LONDON:

Printed for J. ROBERTS near the *Oxford-Arms* in *Warwick-Lane*. 1719. Price Six Pence.

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ANTIDOTE,

IN A

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TO THE

Free-Thinker,

Occasion'd by the Management of the Pretended Dispute between Dr. Woodward and certain other Physicians.

Printed for J. Roberts, near the Old-Bedlam in Moorfields. 1722.

The Antidote,

IN A

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TO THE

Free-Thinker.

SIR,

THE Generous Part, which you have undertaken, of instructing the Publick in the Pursuit of what is worthy of being follow'd, or giving Rules how to escape what it is our Duty to avoid, encourages me to hope you will receive this Epistle with Candour

I do not here pretend to lay before you Matter of ſo high a Nature as what uſually engages you, who are a Philoſopher, to wit, the Conſiderations of Good and Evil, but preſume to trouble you with Things of much leſs Moment, and which concern only Life and Death, abſtracted from the Regards of Virtue or Vice.

You muſt, I doubt not, have read the Pamphlets which certain Members of the College of Phyſicians have preſcrib'd to the Town; wherein they have mutually admoniſh'd us againſt taking each other, as very bad for us in all manner of Diſtempers. This has, by no means, been carry'd on like a Controverſy among Men of Breeding and Learning; but the Subject-matter in Debate, tho' it regards our very Being, has been wholly neglected, in order to turn the Perſon who gave Riſe to it, into Contempt and Ridicule, and to ſuppreſs his Doctrine by deſtroying his Character. Upon this Occaſion I take the Liberty to appeal to

you,

you, and hope you will interpose in Behalf of the Publick; lest a good and useful Design may be lost to the World by your being diverted from the Consideration of it, thro' the Artifice of those, whose Interest it may be to draw our Attention another Way.

See then how this Dispute lies. Dr. *Woodward*, who heretofore published *The Natural History of the Earth, with an Account of the Deluge*, as also, *The History of Vegetation*, (which Works are had in great Esteem among the Learned all over *Europe*) has finally, turn'd his Thoughts to the Improvement of Physick. In order to this most useful Purpose, he has made Dissections of various Animals, and search'd into the Body of Man, with an inexpressible Diligence and Care, as well knowing from the Failures of others who had gone before, that there was no Safety or certain Reliance, but on the Foundation of Nature her self; and that she was only to be understood by Experiments and Observations: By the Help of these he has made Discoveries not only

new, but alſo of the higheſt Moment; and his attempt has been no leſs than that of Reſcuing Phyſick out of the Myſtery and Obſcurity wherein it has hitherto lain, and reducing it into the Form of a Science, by which means it may be render'd ſo intelligible, that every Man may underſtand his own Caſe, and know whether his Phyſician treats him in a Rational Manner or not. As to the Medicines, he has taken them under ſtrict Examination, and ſhewn, that there are ſeveral in common Uſe which are of no Effect, and others that are really hurtful. He has given the *Idea* of the Body of Man in Health, and alſo under Diſeaſes, aſſigning the Cauſes and Remedies of each in a Method that is Natural and Mechanical. In a Word, Dr. *Woodward* attempts to ſettle a Rational Teſt in Phyſick; and in the Courſe of this Labour he could not avoid taking Notice, that the Practice of ſome very eminent Phyſicians would be of great Weight and Authority againſt him, which made it neceſſary to examine their Conduct, but at the ſame Time, confines

Himself strictly to Nature and such Argu-ments as arise from it; nay, he treats them with that Candour, that he takes the Re-presentations of their Practice from their own Words, by all which it appears, that it was necessary for him for the Sake of the Rest of Mankind to take Care lest the Ten-derness towards the Character of a Brew, might endanger the Lives of a great Many. If Dr. *Woodward* is less Received by the Town, than those whom he answers; in that Proportion it became, the more excusable in him to discover their Errors; or his An-tidote must have been egregiously unequal to their Poison. If there be a Case in Na-ture wherein one Man is allowed to cen-sure the Conduct of another, it cer-tainly is where he professes to save his Neighbour, whom the Person he oppose, is going to destroy.

It is with this Support that Dr. *Woodward* has brought certain other Physicians to the Test of Nature. What do they on this Oc-casion? They do not pretend either to quel-

tion

ſtion the Truth or the Importance of his Diſcoveries. They, no where, alledge that he has repreſented or quoted them unfairly. The World therefore might very reaſonably have expected, that theſe Gentlemen ſhould, for the Common Good, have enter'd upon Arguments, offer'd Reaſons, or endeavour'd to falſify the Facts which he produces, eſpecially ſince he has obſerved the greateſt Reſpect and Civility to their Perſons, in all that he has written againſt their Practice: But inſtead of this, we find them ſitting down under a plain and direct Condemnation of their Practice, and contenting themſelves with attacking him only in his Perſon and Character, induſtriouſly omitting whatever concerns the Reaſons of his Practice. This Endeavour to render him contemptible has been carry'd on with ſo great a Spirit and Eagerneſs, that it has produc'd a quite contrary Effect upon reaſonable People, and alarm'd impartial and indifferent Men into a Suſpicion, that ſo much Rage could not be provok'd by the meer contrary Opinion of ſo frivolous

volous a Man as they would repreſent Dr. *Woodward*. A Revenge above the Provocation has rais'd the Curioſity of thoſe, who are Strangers to the Doctor, to enquire into this Matter, and it appears that there is much further Cauſe of Anger againſt Him than has been repreſented in Print, for He has cured thoſe whom his Antagoniſts have given over, and frequently found eaſie Remedies for the Recovery of ſuch, whom they had for a *Series* of Time tortur'd into a Deſpair of Life, and Impatience of Being.

Since this is the real Fact and State of the Caſe, I cannot but deſire of you, *Sir*, in Vindication of a Truth of this Importance, to admoniſh theſe Gentlemen, that it is required of them, to ſay ſomething in Refutation of His Doctrine, more than that there is one Dr. *Byfield*, who is learned enough to tranſcribe the Words *Depredations* of the *Bile*, the Adjectives *Nervous* and *Elegant*, or the Terms *Succharine Vitriolick*, or *Ammoniack*. Pleaſe to inform theſe Writers,

Writers that it is no Argument that Dr. *Woodward* wants Understanding that they have made Dr. *Byfield* use his Phrases and talk Nonsense.

It would be worthy of you to let these witty Gentlemen know, that it is expected of them to do something more than this, before they can prevail upon Us to believe ill of a Man, who attemps to do us good Offices at the Hazard of the Scandal he could not but foresee He should meet with from censuring Persons, he believ'd had nothing to bring against Him but Reproaches and Invectives foreign to the Matter in Debate: But because it is seldom seen, that Men are out of Countenance while they support the Reputation of their Parts, however they misapply them, it may be necessary for you who lead us in our Taste of Politeness, to examine whether Dr. *Woodward* has been, after all, really expos'd with Wit and Humour, or whether he did not deserve those Qualities

ties ſhould rather have been employ'd in His Favour and Defence.

As for my Part, I cannot ſee how Men are juſtify'd in uſing the Talents of their Minds, any more than the Strength of their Hands againſt innocent Men. At the ſame Time that I ſay this, I do not accuſe the Writers againſt Dr. *Woodward* of any more than a Will to hurt Him, and am really of Opinion that thoſe Gentlemen are Guilty of much more Evil than they have committed. For Dr. *Woodward* is in good Health, and Safe, out of the Hands of thoſe who *Murder'd* and *Diſſected* Him for Alarming the Town againſt their being aſſaſſin'd by them in *their real Perſons*, as he himſelf has, ſince, been in *Effigie*.

The Diſpute is about the Life of Man, and it is a melancholly Conſideration that Nothing is anſwer'd but in profeſt Mirth.

What then, *Sir*, will you inſtruct us to do on this Occaſion, who are indifferent in the Quarrel, I ſhould rather ſay who are unprejudic'd, but cannot be indifferent, For it is the *Cauſe of Mankind which theſe Men, harden'd and habituated to the Sighs, Lamentations and Groans of the Sick-bed*, treat with this abandon'd and mercileſs Levity. Such awkard and unſeaſonable Pretenders to be witty, ſhould be made to underſtand how far they fall ſhort of their Aim. They ſhould be terrify'd from making themſelves thus mean and contemptible, which is always the Conſequence of Mens endeavouring to be what Nature never deſign'd them. Be pleas'd therefore to convince the Town, by declaring what you very well know, that the Letter from Dr. *Byfield* to Dr. *Woodward* is not a Piece of Wit or Humour, either in the Contrivance of it, or the manner of conducting the Thing contriv'd. For without dwelling upon the Scurrility of drawing in an innocent Man's

Name for the Abuſe of another only to ſerve a Jeſt, it is Pity to the laſt Degree, and againſt all Propriety, to make Him who is introduc'd for a Creature, full of Vanity and Self-Conceit, ſpeaking of Himſelf, as he does, Things that muſt render Him contemptible. The Letter, under the feign'd Name of Dr. *Andrew Tripe*, you will ſay, is full of the ſame Want of Circumſpection, and without Senſe of Character. It is too inſipid even to give Offence, except where it is nauſeous and deals in Alluſions that expoſe the Infirmities of human Nature it ſelf, rather than thoſe of any individual Man.

When you ſhall be pleas'd to take this Matter into your ſerious Conſideration, you will caſt your Eye upon the *Mock-Opera* of *Hydaſpes*, and there you will obſerve that it concerns Dr. *Woodward* no otherwiſe than that the Title of *Greſbamite* ſays where he lives, and the Satyr goes no farther than to declare (what very

many owe their Health to the Knowledge) That Dr. *Woodward* lies in *Greſham-College*. The World may alſo ſee, that this Gentleman paſſes his Time there in Contemplation and conſtant Attention on the Caſes of the Sick and Diſeas'd, and that he is far from pretending to perform Cures *Extempore*, but ever meditating on the Torments and Sorrows of thoſe in Pain, when he is not at their Bedſides or Couches, obſerving the Adminiſtration or Operation of his Medicines, and abating and enlarging them as Events and Symptoms declare the momentary Condition of his Patients. If this Care, Aſſiduity and Attention to one Thing, and that Human Life it ſelf, in Hazard and Diſtreſs, appears in a Man's very Geſture and Countenance, it is by no means among virtuous and intelligent Men, a Cauſe of Reproach and Ridicule, but any Singularity ariſing from ſo generous a Cauſe, ſhould inſpire Reſpect and Kindneſs wherever it is obſerv'd. Haughtineſs and Arrogance in Men who are conſtantly con-

converſant with the loweſt State of human Nature argue an Inſenſibility worthy the Reproof of the Stage, and I doubt not, if Men will not recollect themſelves and conſider their own Perſons and Behaviour, but they will be Part of our next Winter's Diverſion there. For it will be a virtuous Action in whoever ſhall undertake it, to make a Jeſt of merry Homicides.

In the mean Time theſe Men have, with all their Might, done no more againſt Mr. *Woodward*, than what has been done in all Ages againſt the beſt of Men, by Perſons envious of Great and Laudable Undertakings. And you know, *Sir*, *Socrates* himſelf met with the like Treatment; and the two greateſt Philoſophers of the laſt Age, Dr. *Harvey* and Monſieur *Deſcartes* with a much worſe; nay, our own Time has ſeen a Gentleman not only of a noble Family, but celebrated alſo over the whole World for his great Diſcoveries, made the Subject of a Comedy.

I hope, *Sir*, when you conſider this great and populous City, ſubject at every Seaſon of the Year to the Rage of Diſtempers, and theſe Epidemical, a Queſtion concerning the Health of Men, offer'd with Learning and Diſcretion againſt the apparent Intereſt of him that advances the Novelty ſhall not be overloo'k'd, but have the Honour of your Examination. All that is demanded is, that the Perſons concern'd may be inform'd, that Dr. *Woodward* has a juſt Pretence to the Reſpect of Mankind for his Attempt, and that the Falſity of his Aſſertions is to be prov'd, before his Friends and Patients will decline ſupporting Him by all juſt and honourable Methods. For if ſuch Proceedings as thoſe againſt this Gentleman are to be tolerated, there will be ſtill fewer who will hereafter ſacrifice Their Eaſe, Their Time and Their Fortune to the Service of Their Country.

I am, *Sir*,

Your moſt Obedient

I

Humble Servant.